



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Building Safety & Inspections Division

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RESIDENTIAL DECKS AND LANDINGS

This handout is a guide only and may not contain all of the requirements of the City Ordinances. All proposed work is subject to Zoning and Building Safety code review.

BUILDING PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL DECKS OR LANDINGS ATTACHED TO A BUILDING OR FREESTANDING MORE THAN 30 INCHES ABOVE GRADE.

PERMITS ARE STRONGLY SUGGESTED BUT NOT REQUIRED FOR FREESTANDING DECKS OR LANDINGS NOT MORE THAN 30 INCHES ABOVE ADJACENT GRADE OR NOT PART OF AN ACCESSIBLE ROUTE (STAIRS OR SIDEWALK)

NO LANDING OR DECK MAY BE LOCATED ON AN EASEMENT, INCLUDING DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENTS OFTEN FOUND ALONG REAR OR SIDE LOT LINES.

SOME ZONING ORDINANCE REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO RESIDENTIAL DECKS:

- Decks and landings located in the rear yard are considered structures for the purposes of calculating rear yard structure coverage. Please see the handout, *Rear Yard Coverage Limitations for Single-Family and Two-Family Dwellings*, for more information.
- Decks and landings attached to the principal structure must comply with the same minimum setback requirements as the principal structure, with some exceptions:
 - Front setback is typically 30 feet, except that attached decks need only be set back 22 feet from the front lot line if their cumulative encroachment into the 30 foot front setback does not exceed 240 square feet.
 - Rear setback is typically 30 feet, except that attached decks need only be set back 22 feet from the rear lot line if their cumulative encroachment into the 30 foot front setback does not exceed 240 square feet.
 - Side setback is typically 5 feet from the side lot line.
 - Side street setback is typically 10 feet from the side street lot line. Please note that the side street setback is typically only applicable to corner lots. In such cases, the lot line with the shorter street frontage is considered the front lot line and the lot line with the longer street frontage is considered the side street lot line. This rule applies no matter which way the house faces and no matter how the property is addressed.

- Freestanding decks or landings located in the rear yard are typically permitted within 3 feet of the rear or side lot lines.

REQUIRED INFORMATION WHEN APPLYING FOR A PERMIT:

- City of Crystal building permit application
- Two copies of a Certificate of Survey or two copies of a site plan drawn to scale, indicating:
 - ✓ lot dimensions
 - ✓ location and dimensions of existing structure(s), including all buildings, sheds, garages, decks, patios, sidewalks and driveways
 - ✓ location and dimensions of the proposed structure(s)
 - ✓ setback measurements from property lines (see site plan drawing)
- Two copies of a floor plan, drawn to scale, showing the design of proposed structure(s) and type of materials being used for construction of the structure(s), including:
 - ✓ size and spacing of floor joists
 - ✓ size of decking
 - ✓ size, location and spacing of posts
 - ✓ size of headers
 - ✓ type of lumber to be used
- Two copies of a rear or side elevation of the proposed structure, including:
 - ✓ height of structure from grade
 - ✓ diameter and depth of footings
 - ✓ guardrail height, if any
 - ✓ spacing of intermediate rails

BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS:

All residential decks will be designed to support a live load of 40 pounds per square foot and balconies will be designed to support a live load of 60 pounds per square foot. Some deck designs may not support the addition of a screened or 3-season porch. This should be considered when choosing construction materials and structural design.

Materials

- Decks, landings and balconies exposed to the weather will be constructed of approved wood with natural resistance to decay, such as redwood and cedar. Ledger beams will be fastened to the building structure using ½ inch diameter lag screws or approved fasteners.
- Pressure-preservative-treated wood will comply with the American Wood Preservers Association UI Standard based on exposure (exterior) and use (above ground or ground contact). The lumber must bear the quality mark (stamp or end tag) of an approved inspection agency. Designers, builders and home owners will verify that appropriate hardware (hangers, nails, brackets) is used with the particular treatment of the lumber.
- Plastic and composite materials proposed for posts, beams, joists, decking and railings require submittal with the permit application of product specific ICC-ES evaluation reports, or of test reports from an approved testing agency, for review and approval by the Building Official. Decks using unapproved materials will not receive final approval and may require removal of unapproved materials.

- All exposed connections between the deck and the building structure will be flashed. Flashing materials will be corrosion resistant and compatible with other deck materials.

Footings and Piers

- * Frost footings are required for decks and landings attached to a building or structure that has frost footings. All frost footings will be a minimum of 42 inches below finished grade.
- * Individual concrete or masonry piers shall project a minimum of 6 inches above finished grade, and project 8 inches above finished grade when supporting cedar or redwood. Cylindrical concrete pier diameters will be as listed on the Beam and Footing Sizes table. Minimum concrete pier diameter will be 8 inches.

Joists and Framing

- * Wood joists within 18 inches of finished grade or wood beams within 12 inches of finished grade and their supports shall be redwood, cedar or an approved decay-resistant material.
- * Floor joist spacing at 24 inches on center requires 2 x decking. Spacing at 16 inches on center permits 1 x decking.
- * Joists should not overhang (cantilever) beams by more than 2 feet and beams should not overhang posts by more than 1 foot.
- * Header beams and joists that frame into ledgers or beams must be supported by approved framing anchors (joist hangers) of appropriate size.

Stairways

- * If a stairway is to be provided, it must be no less than 36 inches in width. Stairways may be constructed having a 7 ³/₄ inch maximum rise (height) and a 10 inch minimum run (length). The dimensions of any one tread run or riser may not vary from the dimensions of any other tread run and rise by more than ³/₈".
- * Stairway illumination is required by the code.
- * Open risers are permitted, provided the opening between the treads does not permit the passage of a 4 inch diameter sphere.

Guards and Handrails

- * Decks, landings, ramps, balconies and porches greater than 30 inches above grade will be protected by a guard no less than 36 inches in height. Openings in guards will be less than 4 inches. Openings for required guards on the sides of stair treads will be less than 4 3/8 inches.

Guards and Handrails continued...

- * Handrails are required on all stairways having 4 or more risers. All required handrails shall be 1 1/4 inches minimum in diameter and not greater than 2 inches maximum.
- * Handrails shall be placed not less than 34 inches or more than 38 inches above the nosing of the stair treads. Handrails shall be continuous the full length of stairs from a point directly above the top riser of a flight to a point directly above the lowest riser of the flight.
- * Handrail ends must be returned to a wall or post.
- * The handgrip must have a smooth surface with no sharp corners; edges shall have a minimum radius of 1/8 ".
- * Handrails adjacent to a wall shall have a space not less than 1 1/2" between the wall and the handrail.